AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Previously Presented) A game and messenger client server system, comprising:

a plurality of game clients;

a game server including logic to operate a multiplayer game using inputs from and outputs to an active game set of game clients including the plurality of game clients, wherein game clients other than those in the active game set can join an active game by supplying the game server with a reference to the active game;

a plurality of messenger clients;

a messenger server including logic to forward messages from a sender messenger client to a receiving messenger client;

logic to couple a game client to a messenger client to allow the game client to determine an ability of the messenger client to receive messages, and to create and send to the messenger client data used to initiate joining a game, whereby a message sent by the messenger client includes the data used to initiate joining a game, and wherein the data in the message sent by the messenger client comprises a description of the game server and a command line executable for an invitee client to connect to the game server;

logic to validate the data in the message with a data server; and

logic to initiate a join of a game at the invitee client, using data received in a message to the invitee.

2-7.   (Canceled)

8.   (Original) The game and messenger client server system of claim 1, further comprising an icon that indicates a state of an inviter client.

9.   (Original) The game and messenger client server system of claim 8, wherein the icon is a game-specific icon.

10.   (Original) The game and messenger client server system of claim 1, further comprising logic to generate a data file sent in response to a request from the invitee client.

11-16. (Canceled)

17.   (Previously Presented) A method of operating a multi-player game having a plurality of game clients and a plurality of messenger clients, the plurality of game clients and plurality of messenger clients in respective communication with a game server and a messenger server, the method comprising:

        joining the game by sending a reference to the game to the game server;

        determining, at an inviter game client, an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages;

        sending, from the inviter game client to the inviter messenger client, data created by the inviter game client and used to initiate joining the game;

        sending a message including the data used to initiate joining the game to the messenger server;

        routing the message to an invitee messenger client;

        validating the data in the message with a data server; and

        using the data in the routed message to invoke a game client and join the game, wherein the data sent from the inviter game client and included in the routed message further comprises a command line and a registry entry for the invitee messenger client to invoke the game client and connect to the game server.

18.   (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising sending, from the game server to the inviter game client, a reference used to join the game.

19.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising sending the message to a list of messenger clients associated with the inviter messenger client,

        wherein an updated state is perceptible by a user of the invitee messenger client.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising updating a state of an icon associated with the inviter messenger client in response to receiving the message.

21-22. (Canceled)

23.   (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising sending a request for a game data file to the game server.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the game data file includes a reference to the game locally.

25-27.   (Canceled)

28.   (Previously Presented) A method of operating a multi-player game having an inviter client, an invitee client, and a first server, the method comprising:

        invoking an inviter game client at the inviter client;

        connecting the inviter game client to the game by sending a reference to the game to the first server;

        determining, at the inviter game client, an ability of an inviter messenger client to receive messages;

        creating a message at the inviter client containing data used for invoking an invitee game client and for joining the game, wherein the data is created by the inviter game client;

        routing the message to the invitee client;

        validating the data in the message with a data server; and

        using the data in the message to invoke the invitee game client and join the game, wherein the data in the message created at the inviter client further comprises a reference to a registry at the invitee client that is common to the inviter game client.

29.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein creating the message comprises creating the message at the inviter client.

30.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein routing the message is by using TCP/IP.

31.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein creating the message comprises creating the message at the first server.

32.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising sending the message to a second server.

33.   (Previously Presented) A game and messenger client server system, comprising:

        a plurality of game clients including an inviter and an invitee game client;

        a plurality of messenger clients including an inviter and invitee messenger client;

        a server including logic to operate a multiplayer game using inputs from and outputs to an active game set of game clients of the plurality of game clients, wherein game clients other than those in the active game set can join an active game by supplying the server with a reference to the active game;

        logic to couple the inviter game client to the inviter messenger client to allow the inviter game client to determine an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages and to send the inviter messenger client data used to initiate joining a game, whereby a message sent by the inviter messenger client includes the data used to initiate joining a game; and

        logic to initiate a join of a game at the invitee game client, using data created by the inviter game client and received in a message to the invitee messenger client, wherein the data received in the message to the invitee messenger client further comprises a registry entry from the inviter game client that is usable for handling invitee client-specific details for the initiation of the joining of the game,

        wherein the inviter messenger client includes logic to forward messages to the invitee messenger client, and wherein the invitee messenger client includes logic to validate the data in the message with a data server.

34.   (Canceled)

35.   (Previously Presented) A method for providing a multi user networked computing environment, the method using an activity server and a messenger server, where the activity server and the messenger server are configured to communicate with a plurality of user computer systems, the user computer system including an activity client where the user computer system executes a user interface

operated by a human user and is further configured to engage an activity using the activity client, wherein the user interface includes a display device and a user input device, wherein the user computer system is coupled to a network for exchanging information with the activity server and the messenger server, the method comprising:

accepting signals from the user input device to, engage the activity using the activity

client;

presenting one or more preferences to the user computer system, where the one or more preferences are associated with activities;

selecting at least one preference to join the activity;

enabling a determination, at the activity client, of an ability of a first messenger client to receive

messages;

invoking the selected activity with the first messenger client;

providing to the messenger server a user state and a reference to the activity in

which the user is participating, wherein the reference to the activity is created by the activity client and comprises a registry key from the activity server that points to an executable to invoke the activity; [[and]]

presenting to another user associated with at least one of the plurality of user computer systems the user state and the reference to the activity; and

validating the user state and the reference to the activity presented to the another user with a data server.

36.   (Original) The method of claim 35 further comprising:

selecting to join the user in the activity by the another user;

invoking another activity client, where the another activity client is associated with the another user; and

joining the user and the another user in a multi user activity.

37.   (Original) A method of claim 35, wherein the activity is a game.

38.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable non-transitory medium including computer
program code, which when executed on a server, provides for having a game server and a messenger
server provide a multi player computer environment, the computer program code comprising:

        program code to accept signals from a user input device to engage a game using a game client;

        program code to present one or more preferences to a user computer system, where the one or
more preferences are associated with games;

        program code to select at least one preference to join the game;

        program code to enable a determination by the game client of an ability of a messenger client to
receive messages;

        program code to invoke the selected game with a messenger client;

        program code to provide to the messenger server a user state and a reference to the game in
which the user is playing, wherein the reference to the game comprises a registry key from and created
by the game client that refers to a registry storing information on a directory location for a game client
executable; and

        program code to present to another user associated with at least one of a plurality of user
computer systems the user state and the reference to the game; and

        program code to validate the user state and the reference to the activity presented to the
another user with a data server.

39.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 38, further
comprising:

        program code to select to join the user in the game by the another user;

        program code to invoke another game client, where the another game client is associated with the
another user; and

        program code to join the user and the another user in a multi-game activity.

40.   (Previously Presented) Logic executing on an invitee client device to initiate joining by an
invitee game client to an active game that is hosted by a game server and to which an inviter game client
is joined, the invitee client including an invitee messenger client for receiving in at least one message
from an inviter messenger client data used to initiate joining a game, the logic comprising:

validation logic for validating the data in the message with a data server;

invocation logic for using the data to invoke the invitee game client and connect the invitee game client to the game server, wherein the data is created by the inviter game client that determines an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages, and includes a reference to the game server and a reference to the active game, the inviter and invitee game clients being respectively associated with the inviter and invitee messenger clients, and wherein the data further includes the reference to the game server in an invokable command line provided in the at least one message from the inviter messenger client.

41.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, wherein the data used to initiate joining a game includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

42.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic for activating the invocation logic in response to action by a user.

43.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic for displaying a buddy list of the invitee messenger client and an indication that the invitee game client may join an active game which a member of the buddy list is playing.

44.   (Previously presented) The logic at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic for displaying a game-specific icon identifying the active game.

45.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, wherein the invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

46.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, wherein the invitee messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the inviter messenger and game clients reside at a second computer system.

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47.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic for sending to other messenger clients at least one message including a reference to an active game.

48.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40 wherein the invitee messenger client is operable to receive the at least one message via a messenger server.

49.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic to read at least one registry entry usable to invoke the invitee game client.

50.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, wherein the invitee messenger client is operable to receive at, least one message including a reference to a potential game, the logic for use at an invitee client further comprising validation logic for validating the potential game as legitimate.

51.   (Previously presented) The logic executing at an invitee client device of claim 40, further comprising logic for generating usage information to track game usage by the invitee game client.

52.   (Previously Presented) A method of operating an invitee client to initiate joining by an invitee game client to an active game that is hosted by a game server and to which an inviter game client is joined, the invitee client including an invitee messenger client for receiving in at least one message from an inviter messenger client data used to initiate joining a game, the method comprising:

    validating the data in the message with a data server;

    invoking the invitee game client using the data; and

    connecting the invitee game client to the game server using the data, wherein the data is created by the inviter game client that determines an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages, and includes a reference to the game server and a reference to the active game, the inviter and invitee game clients being respectively associated with the inviter and invitee messenger clients.

53.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the data includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

54.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising initiating joining to the active game in response to action by a user.

55.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising displaying a buddy list of the invitee messenger client and an indication that the invitee game client may join an active game which a member of the buddy list is playing.

56.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising displaying a game-specific icon identifying the active game.

57.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

58.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the invitee messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the inviter messenger and game clients reside at a second computer system.

59.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising sending to other messenger clients at least one message including a reference to an active game.

60.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising receiving the at least one message via a messenger server.

61.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising reading at least one registry entry usable to invoke the invitee game client.

62.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising receiving at least one message including a reference to a potential game, the method further comprising validating the potential game as legitimate.

63.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising generating usage information to track game usage by the invitee game client.

64.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable <u>non-transitory</u> medium comprising program code, which when executed at an invitee client, provides for initiating joining by an invitee game client to an active game that is hosted by a game server and to which an inviter game client is joined by enabling actions, the invitee client including an invitee messenger client that is capable of being coupled to a network to receive messages, comprising:

program code for invoking the invitee game client using data used to initiate joining a game, wherein the data is created by the inviter game client that determines an ability of an inviter messenger client to receive messages, and is contained in at least one message received by the invitee messenger client from the inviter messenger client, and includes a reference to the game server and a reference to the active game, wherein the data includes the reference to the active game in an invoking command line provided by the inviter game client in the at least one in the message received from the inviter messenger client; and

program code for connecting the invitee game client to the game server using the data, wherein the inviter and invitee game clients are respectively associated with the inviter and invitee messenger clients;

wherein the program code for invoking the invitee game client further comprises program code for validating the contents of the message received by the invitee messenger client with a data server.

65.   (Currently amended) The computer readable <u>non-transitory</u> medium of claim 64, wherein the data includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

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66.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, wherein the

program code for initiating joining to the active game is operable to initiate joining to the active game in

response to action by a user.

67.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, further

comprising program code for displaying a buddy list of the invitee messenger client and an indication

that the invitee game client may join an active game which a member of the buddy list is playing.

68.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, further

comprising program code for displaying a game-specific icon identifying the active game.

69.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, wherein the

invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

70.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, wherein the

invitee messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the inviter messenger and

game clients reside at a second computer system.

71.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, further

comprising program code for sending to other messenger clients at least one message including a

reference to an active game.

72.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, wherein the

invitee messenger client is operable to receive the at least one message via a messenger server.

73.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, further

comprising program code to read at least one registry; entry usable to invoke the invitee game client.

74.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 64, wherein

invitee messenger client is operable to receive, at least one message including a reference to a potential

game, the computer program product further comprising program code for validating the potential game as legitimate.

75.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable <u>non-transitory</u> medium of claim 64, further comprising program code for generating usage information to track game usage by the invitee game client.

76.   (Previously Presented) Logic executing at an inviter client device, the inviter client device including an inviter game client and an inviter messenger client for sending at least one message over a network to an invitee messenger client, the logic comprising:

  logic for causing data used to initiate joining a game to be created by the inviter game client and to be provided to the inviter messenger client for inclusion in the at least one message, wherein the data enables an invitee game client associated with the invitee messenger client to validate the data in the message with a data server and to initiate joining an active game to which the inviter game client is joined, and wherein providing the data to the inviter messenger client further comprises:

    determining an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages;

    outputting the data to a file with a file name; and

    passing the file name to the inviter messenger client.

77.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 76, wherein the logic for causing the data to be provided comprises a messaging interface.

78.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 76, wherein the inviter messenger client is operable to send the at least one message via a messenger server.

79.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 76, wherein the active game may be hosted by a game server.

80.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 79, wherein the data enables the invitee messenger client to invoke the invitee game client and connect the invitee game client to the game server.

81.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 79, wherein the data includes a reference to the game server, and a reference to the active game on the game server.

82.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 79, wherein the data includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

83.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 76, wherein the invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

84.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 83, wherein the inviter messenger client is operable to send the at least one message automatically to members of the buddy list.

85.   (Previously presented) The logic of claim 76, wherein the inviter messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the invitee messenger and game clients reside at a second computer system.

86.   (Previously Presented) A method for operating an inviter client, the inviter client including an inviter game client and an inviter messenger client for sending at least one message over a network to an invitee messenger client, the method comprising:

        causing data used to initiate joining a game to be created by the inviter game client, and to be provided to the inviter messenger client for inclusion in the at least one message, wherein the data enables an invitee game client associated with the invitee messenger client to validate the data in the message with a data server and to initiate joining an active game to which the inviter game client is joined, and wherein providing the data to the inviter messenger client further comprises:

                grabbing, by the inviter game client, a window handle for the inviter messenger client;

                determining, by the inviter game client, an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages; and

                sending the inviter messenger client a registered window message with the data.

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87.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein a messaging interface causes the data to be provided to the inviter messenger client.

88.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, further comprising sending the at least one message from the inviter messenger client to the invitee messenger client.

89.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the active game may be hosted by a game server.

90.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 89, wherein the data enables the invitee messenger client to invoke the invitee game client and connect the invitee game client to the game server.

91.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 89, wherein the data includes a reference to the game server, and a reference to the active game on the game server.

92.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 89, wherein the data includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

93.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

94.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 93, further comprising the inviter messenger client sending the at least one message automatically to members of the buddy list.

95.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the inviter messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the invitee messenger and game clients reside at a second computer system.

96.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable non-transitory medium comprising program code, which when executed at an inviter client, the inviter client including an inviter game client and an inviter messenger client, provides for sending at least one message over a network to an invitee messenger client by enabling actions, comprising:

        program code for causing data used to initiate joining a game to be provided to the inviter messenger client for inclusion in the at least one message, wherein the data is created by the inviter game client and enables an invitee game client associated with the invitee messenger client to validate the data in the message and to initiate joining an active game to which the inviter game client is joined , and wherein providing the data to the inviter messenger client further comprises:

                finding, by the inviter game client, a window handle for the inviter messenger client;

                determining, by the inviter game client, an ability of the inviter messenger client to receive messages;

                sending the inviter messenger client a registered window message; and

                getting, by the inviter messenger client, the data used to initiate joining a game.

97.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 96, wherein the program code for causing the data to be provided to the inviter messenger client is included in a messaging interface.

98.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 96, wherein the inviter messenger client is operable to send the at least one message via a messenger server.

99. (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 96, wherein the active game may be hosted by a game server.

100.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 99, wherein the data enables the invitee messenger client to invoke the invitee game client and connect the invitee game client to the game server.

101.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium duct of claim 99, wherein the data includes a reference to the game server, and a reference to the active game on the game server.

102.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 99, wherein the data includes a game server network address that identifies the game server, a game identifier that identifies the active game on the identified game server, and a port identifier that identifies a port on the identified game server.

103.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 96, wherein the invitee messenger client is associated with a member of a buddy list of the inviter messenger client.

104.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 103, wherein the inviter messenger client is operable to send the at least one message automatically to members of the buddy list.

105.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable non-transitory medium of claim 96, wherein the inviter messenger and game clients reside at a first computer system, and the invitee messenger and game clients reside at a second computer system.